

## REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, on page 2, item 2 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner cited Yukawa et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0188817) as a reference but did not include this reference in the Form PTO-892. Applicants respectfully request that this reference be acknowledged in a Form PTO-892 by the Examiner.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsihlas (WO 02/085648) and further in view of Yukawa. In response, Applicants amended independent claim 1 to include the features of claims 5 and 8, and respectfully traverse the rejection based on these amendments.

As now defined in amended claim 1, the annular body includes compressed portions and uncompressed portions alternately arranged in a tire circumferential direction that are formed by partially applying compression forming to a porous material having a uniform cross-sectional shape in a tire circumferential direction. The porous material member has variations in weight per unit length within a range of 0 to 2% in the tire circumferential direction.

Advantageously, by applying compression forming partially to the porous material member, as now defined in claim 1, the present invention has a unique structural feature. The structural feature is that when the annular body is formed by applying compression forming partially to a porous material member, the distribution of weight can be improved relative to the conventional art in the circumferential direction of the tire. More specifically, a compressed portion having a relative small cross-sectional area has a high density, while an uncompressed portion having a relatively large cross-

sectional area has a relatively low density, and therefore the present invention can provide a structure wherein the weight per unit length is constant irrespective of variations in the cross-sectional area.

In contrast, Tsihlas teaches in paragraph [029] that the strips 42, 43 can be formed by molding or machining. However, Tsihlas fails to disclose or suggest that the weight distribution of the strips 42, 43 is uniform in the circumferential direction. In the processing of Tsihlas, portions corresponding to the locations of ridges 44, 45 tend to be comparatively large in weight. Thus, Tsihlas has structural differences that are different from the structure of the present invention. For this reason, any combination of Tsihlas and Yukawa fails to disclose or suggest the features now recited in amended claim 1, and withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-11 is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

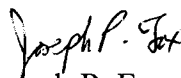
If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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